1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

tribal law, the waku of gawel and the gurrong of nokul would have been the same person; with the wrong marriage a discord is created in the first ascending generation, and sometimes considerable time elapses before a woman is taken in marriage. 582

After marriage a young man usually lives for a short period of varying length with his parents-in-law. After this he may go to his own people and take his wife with him. There is often much protest by the wife when she leaves her parents, but they aid her husband. When a child is born, its parents, if not already with the wife's parents, return there so the grandparents can see the baby. This is only for the first child, although the parents of both the husband and wife are always pleased and anxious to see all the grandchildren. 591 [574]

When a girl leaves her parents for the first time, a younger brother accompanies her (see page 65), a custom called "olokork." (The sister's husband is also dué to her young brother, just as this younger brother is galle to his sister's dué.) The husband looks out for the younger man and assumes the place of a father to him during his residence there. 591 607

When a child is born the new union is greatly solidified; it now has become a fully developed family, and except for the wife's being stolen by another man there would be little chance of permanent rupture even if she ran away. Tribal sentiment would be against her and her paramour or anyone who might have stolen her. The children would seldom go with her in such a case, and the strong attachment a Murngin mother has for her offspring would force her to come back to them. The writer has recorded several instances of a woman's going through the most difficult privations and risking probable death to return to her children after she had been stolen by a man from another tribe. 851 587 626 [152]

If a camp has been ambushed and the men all killed in a general tribal war, the women and children are taken by the conquerors and given as wives to the men who are in the right relationship to them. 727

A man wants as many wives as he can get and still keep his peace with the other males of his clan. The average is about three and a half for middle-aged men; but there is a recorded case of one native with seventeen wives, the majority having been obtained by stealing them or killing their husbands. He also married "wrong." There is a close correlation of having many wives with fighting strength, or with being the son of a man powerful in war who had thereby acquired a large number of women whose brothers would be gawels to 595 554

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

831 The woman's attitude will be illustrated under the head of runaway unions.

836 If a man had a sweetheart in his early youth and the affair terminated after he had acquired his proper mates, he must always feed
514 her if she comes to his camp, and she must always feed him if he goes to hers. Wives, however, always complain and cause trouble for the
578 man who tries to follow this custom because of their jealous fear that he may return to the affair. They are anything but hospitable to a husband's former sweetheart who visits their camps. An understanding husband will allow hospitality, particularly if he and his wife's former lover are good friends and if there has been no early trouble between the two. Otherwise, the husband, too, would forbid a wife to feed her former paramour.

836 Lovers' unions often develop into permanent ones. If there is a dis-
584 pute about a girl between two young men, one of whom has been living with her, it is likely that, all else being equal, the lover would
583 get the girl, for, say the old men, "They were sweethearts." If the woman should be given to the other man, the lovers frequently run away, and the tribe later recognizes the union.

837 A number of customs are connected with sweethearting. At night the husbands generally make their wives sit in their own camps. A favorite time for the assignation of lovers, therefore, is during the day when the women are accessible out in the bush and mangrove jungle, where they gather bulbs and shellfish—in groups for companionship and for fear of being stolen. The young man sneaks up near her and taps a stone on the ground. The woman is on the alert and knows what this means. She tells her companions that she is thirsty, or with some other excuse slips away to join her lover.

Sometimes a man has a woman's friend—always a woman—drop a certain type of string in the loved one's basket. If the woman belongs to the Yiritja moiety and the man to the Dua he puts an opossum fur string into it; if he is Yiritja and she Dua, he uses a red parrot feather string. This, of course, occurs only after he feels fairly confident that his advances will have a favorable reception. She replies through her woman friend, and arrangements are made for a time and place.

578 The following is an account of the operation of this custom, its
837 failure, the feelings of the relatives involved, and the general camp scene during trouble over adultery. Such camp brawls are not infre-

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

of them." This demonstrates clearly the strong bond between these relatives. Sometimes a waku's gawel is not galle to the waku's father except distantly. Obviously, given the above feelings, the gawel-waku relationship adds much to the strength of a clan and at the same time helps prevent trouble between the two groups. 604

If a fight developed, gawel would help waku with the loan of his spears, and, if necessary, by fighting for him. His own sons would also aid his waku, their duć. A waku is taught much of what he knows about fighting and hunting by gawel. If the older man is a magician he also teaches this art to his waku. [868]

Gawel uses waku's property, or vice versa, with the freedom of a brother or father. If gawel's wife is misbehaving, waku tries by indirect threats of death to make her conform to the tribal ideal of conduct. [626]

Sometimes a gawel promises a waku his daughter, the boy makes presents to him for a long period of time, and the gawel then refuses to give him the girl. This means trouble. Strong pressure would usually be put upon the older man to force him to give her to the boy. This might end in an interclan fight, or the waku would probably run away with her. 604 578

Another disappointing situation for waku that occasionally occurs is when a gawel says, "I'll give you the daughters from this wife." The waku makes presents over a period of time, meanwhile watching the woman to see if she is going to bear children. If she is barren or produces only sons he stops making his father-in-law presents and turns his attention to some other gawel. 604 584 431

The Australian aborigine is a most industrious trader. Articles of trade are passed over well-known trade routes for hundreds of miles and through many tribes. The Murngin and their neighbors are no exceptions to this rule. The Ritarngo and the Djinba trade stone spear heads to the seacoast tribes for red ocher and pipe clay, or for wooden spears. Ranga string is exchanged between them, as well as many other articles. The waku-gawel reciprocal is utilized for the trading. All men try to have as many distant waku as they can. Presents are constantly being exchanged between the two, not to acquire material wealth so much as to extend a man's sphere of influence beyond the nearby clans. It pleases a Murngin to have a present sent from a distant people and adds greatly to his social prestige. It also gives him a greater feeling of safety when traveling, to know that he has a waku or gawel with whom he has this trading relationship. Waku and gawel often visit each other and their behavior demonstrates real friendship when they meet. 439 438 604 431 554 574

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

its magical effect, to insure the boys' acquiring many presents on the journey on which they are sent by the older men, and to enable them always to have plenty of good things during their lives. The above quotation is not a formula and is varied according to the speaker.

The two boys, with a near relative such as an older dué (sister's husband, father's sister's son), are sent out (at times this does not occur), usually on separate paths, to visit the various relatives and clans to invite them to the coming ceremony. The relatives of the boys who are present at the time they are sent away and who belong to outside clans are always desirous that the initiates visit their clans. The father chooses a trail for the boy to follow, but the man who accompanies and protects the boy usually modifies the father's directions to fit the circumstances of the journey.

The neophytes usually stay away a month, but their journey may last two moons, or less than one. If they leave when the moon is full they return when there is a new moon. In later years a man always boasts about the many clans he visited, the great distances he traveled, the long period he was absent on his journey.

The young men are sent away, it is said by the old Murngin men, so that they will meet new people, which is felt to be a good thing, and make lifelong friends among their more distant classificatory relatives. This ritualistic making of friends is not organized among these people as highly as in West Australia, nor does the path followed by the boy occupy as important a place in his later life as it does in West Australian regions.

One Wessel Island boy of the Perango clan went down through Elcho Island, where he visited the clan of that country, through Arnhem Bay and into the country of the Gwiyamil clan.[11] A candidate for initiation from the Wangurri clan went overland to the Barlamomo of Blue Mud Bay.

Before leaving, the boys are given new armlets which are then painted with white clay; white cockatoo feather headdresses are put on them, and their faces are daubed with white paint. Usually a white clay bark band is tied around the forehead. Red ocher and kangaroo fat with a white clay outline are put on the boys' faces. A large hair belt, suspended from which is a painted opossum fur string pubic covering, is put on the initiate for the first time. Before this he has gone completely nude, as do all uncircumcised boys.

Wherever the boy goes on his journey the people are informed of the coming ceremony and invited to attend. All those who are invited give

[11] See the clan and tribal map, page 40.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

presents, such as spears, hair belts, spear-throwers, and other valued articles, to the boy. Most of these things are later presented to the father, older brothers, gawel, and muri. If the boy were not treated liberally his clan would be offended, and it might lead to an open feud; but the people in the clans visited are always generous and such cause for a feud is never given. While the boy is away the women gather yams, lily bulbs, and other vegetable food to prepare for their guests. Many of the visitors come with the boy when he returns, while others precede him to participate in the preliminary ceremonies.

3. When the neophyte arrives in camp, or frequently before he comes back, the Warn-gai-tja is erected in the center of the main camp where all the people live. Two poles about six feet long are cut from trees (of any variety) in the old men's ground and tied together. A bunch of leaves is tied to the top of each pole. If three boys are to be initiated, three poles are cut and tied together; if only one boy is to be circumcised, only one pole. Grass is strewn on the ground around the foot of the pole. The sticks are Dua and the leaves are Yiritja.

The general camp of both the men and women is called Wonga. In the center of it, or sometimes at the side of this ground if better suited for dancing, is the general dance ground. The warngaitja is located in the center of the dance floor. It is here that men and women dance. This is the only part of the ceremonial ground to which women and uncircumcised boys have access. It is sometimes called Wakinu Wonga, which can be translated as "the camp of those who do not belong," and is used in a contemptuous sense (see pages 110-113).

The men bring the warngaitja into the main camp from the men's ground. They carry their spears pointing downward and beat time against the shafts with their spear-throwers. They sing meanwhile:

"War-li-mar-la din-ya
War-li-mar-la din-ya
(Dua sticks of the warngaitja)
Warn-gai-tja ngu-lai-ngu-lai
Warn-gai-tja ngu-lai-ngu-lai"
(Yiritja leaves of the warngaitja)

The following songs are also sung:

(1) Stone spear
(2) Camp made by Wawilak Sisters in the Garl-ban-uk country (Gun-al-pia)

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

age-grade sense. Their beards demonstrate their belonging to the mature men's age grade. The red parrot feather decoration on the beards helps to ritualize this symbol of manliness.)

J. The Higher Totems Are Shown the Older Men

1. The old men leave the young men and show their higher totems to each other.

1. Following the ceremony of showing the totems to the older young men, who represent an age-grade stratum of the male division of the tribe higher than the recently initiated boys, iguana is repeated; then follows the sea-water dance which has been described, and finally iguana, with the usual conventional ending of "benbur benbur."

Only the older men see the higher rangas. The young men are left and the older men go inside the bush to look at the rangas which only they are allowed to see. The string is taken off all the totemic emblems at this time. This string is presented to members of the opposite moiety, or very frequently, as has been said before, kutara gives it to mari and mari to kutara (they are of the same moiety) as a demonstration of the solidarity of their relationship. If people who are somewhat distant, therefore a bit strange, ask for this ranga string, it arouses a considerable feeling of antagonism in the owner. It is usually said, "Have people lost their heads? Can't they think? We will just give them ordinary food later. We won't give them string." —"If they are very good friends we can give them food, but the food is not given a power name."

K. The Eating of the Sacred Bread, and Conclusion of the Ceremony

1. The bread is eaten by those of near kin.
2. The string is removed from the emblems and the neophytes are instructed.

1. The leader sings over the palm bread (or yams) which is put in the ashes and cooked. He calls out the totem names of the various rangas (kookaburra, banitja, etc.). This is supposed to infuse the bread with the power names of the rangas and make it "just the same as a ranga," which means that the totemic spirit resides within the bread. Only the men who understand can eat this, which means only the men who are near relations and who have been initiated.

The Murngin always eat in this way after all ceremonies. To outside tribes the people say, "This is maraiin that belongs to the Narra,"

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

but the power name is not given to the food for them. The natives agree that this food is eaten because all Wongar yolno did the same thing. If the leader gives the food with his name to it to his friends from another tribe, his own clanspeople would wait until there was an opportunity and kill him, because they do not want to have that name go to another tribe.—All my most reliable informants gave me this information.

Yiritja and Dua both eat this food, providing they are from one country, which really means, if they are closely related. My most intelligent informant said this: "Dorng and Ilkara [two men of the Liaalaomir group] can eat our food which has a big name because their sister married one of our people. It is all right for the Ritarngo to eat Warumeri and Wangurri food which has a big name because we have one ranga, because we are friends. Sometimes we give our ranga from the Warumeri side to the Ritarngo and they give us rangas from the land side. That is because that duck came from the Ritarngo to us in Wongar days."

2. The string is taken from the totemic emblems, wrapped around the hand into a neat ball, and placed in a basket. The carved-log ranga (see page 340) is hidden once more in the mud of the ceremonial leader's totem well. It is said that the leader likes to have them all remain there. The men can eat no animal food, but only bush (vegetable) food, until they have been painted. The old men say to them, "You must do what we tell you. Put your head and ears to these things. You don't want to swear at your old men or your big brothers. You want to talk a good way to them. We don't want you to steal. You don't want to go running after other men's women." The old men also tell the younger ones which rangas belong to the different totemic wells and which wells belong to the various clans. This ends the Dua Narra ceremony.

Native Interpretation.—The old men say, "This makes one people."

THE YIRITJA NARRA CEREMONY

A. Preparation

1. The same general preparations are made as those before the Dua Narra.

1. The Yiritja Narra ceremony parallels the Dua Narra rites. After a log has been cut, scraped, and carved, the leader sends out word to the various surrounding clans that a Narra is to be held. A Duni

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

this time are forbidden to women, and relating all the incidents that directly refer to the Wauwalak, for example, the pregnancy of the elder sister, the flow of afterbirth blood, and the menstruation of the young girl.

The *jiritja* snakes call out, and are answered by the women; and nearby the bullroarer is twirled again. Then the dancing men file around the *ngainmara*-covered women, the leader beating his sticks and singing; the young boys are present. The women have brought presents of food, which are handed over to the *jiritja* snakes and their companions.

The dancing men symbolize Julunggul surrounding the women (the Wauwalak in their *murlk*); but these are not swallowed, because none are menstruating or have after-birth blood. "The men dancing around are smelling, but they smell no odour of blood."

About this time, visitors from surrounding territories reach the Kunapipi camp; and the foregoing rituals, that serve as introduction to the ceremony as a whole, are completed. Some of them, however, are repeated, both at the sacred ground and at the main camp; important features are the men's dancing around the *ngainmara*-covered women, and the giving of presents, which are taken back to the ceremonial ground and offered first to Julunggul (for his swallowing) before being eaten.

On the sacred ground the *jiritja* men dig a large hole (*nanggaru* or *nonggaru*, billabong) representing Muruwul; all the animals, birds, and vegetables, in the guise of totemic actors, climb into it and dance, just as did those which "ran away" from the Wauwalak. Two other holes are dug, and in each hole squats a man; one, covered with paperbark, represents the female child of the elder sister, while another actor squats outside the hole as the mother. In the second hole is the younger sister, who is menstruating. The "child" in the hole cries, and the "mother" moves around it; then both the "sisters" leave their positions and dance like the Wauwalak. A number of these totemic animals and so on, particularly the opossum, form pairs (male and female) and enter the *nanggaru* (Muruwul), where they simulate coitus.

A number of actors, representing opossums, dance forward around the *nanggaru*; the males have long erect bark penes protruding from their hair-belts. They enact the copulation of these animals.

All these dances are accompanied by singing and beating of sticks, and the young boys going through this ceremony are shown each one and told its significance. On the conclusion of the dancing, every morning and evening, *bukali* (*dua*) or *bukalilji* (*jiritja*), depending on the singing, are called by the leader. Men crouch together while the *bukali* "power" names are called in reference to the totemic beings, and at intervals they shout. [These "power" names, being sacred terms (although there are secular power names too) are in the manner

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

sleep feeling hungry, and dreamt about this Kunapipi. That is, he went back to his "Dreaming" for consolation. [828]

Most of this dream too consists of description of ritual, but not in conventional sequence. Some interesting aspects appear, which amplify our previous discussion of the Kunapipi. There is complete identification of the *jelmalandji* with the Julunggul Snake. But Gumuk re-interpreted the *kanala* and *nanggaru* in commenting on his dream. He said that the *nanggaru* was actually the "Mother's" (that is, the Wauwalak's) uterus, while the *kanala* was the channel ("river") or passage of the vagina, "through which people passed in the Dreaming" (that is, during the period when the Wauwalak walked the earth). He was possibly interpolating here his own theory as to the meaning of these symbols, for usually the *kanala* is the uterus and the *nanggaru* the place of the big Snake. This individual interpretation, however, is extremely valuable; for it is far more logical to classify the *nanggaru*, which is round or oval, as a uterus, and the *kanala*, narrow and resembling a channel, as a vagina. Gumuk's reference to people passing through the *kanala* in the "Dreaming period", is connected with the idea that the Mother "let out" people from her womb, so that they could perform sacred ritual, returning when this was completed. This aspect is not apparent in Yirrkalla mythology; Gumuk possibly assimilated it from Rose River, where Kunapipi ritual has a stronger hold of the people's imagination and sacred activity, and where it is more likely to be influenced by external features. [177]

The calling of the sacred alternate names for the Lightning dancing, the bullroarer and its string, the *kanala* and *nanggaru*, as well as for the *jelmalandji*, has not been mentioned before in our discussion. The concept is found, however, in the calling of the *bukali* (*dua*) or *bukalilji* (*jiritja*), or "power" names of invocation, and some of these are widely distributed. The use of the term *djamala*, in reference to the "Lightning whipping" dance, is equivalent to the *djamala mareiin* mentioned in Chapter IV, which consists of the throwing of fire-sticks; both refer to the Snake's sending lightning so that a tree was split and the Wauwalak were frightened. The climax of Gumuk's dream is the breaking of the bullroarer's string while it is being twirled: it flies through the air and splits a tree, but is itself undamaged. This symbolizes Julunggul's act of sending lightning to split a tree, for the bullroarer "is like the Snake" (that is, part of its spirit), and its whirling "like lightning". It is the natural culmination of the *djamala* dancing around the *nanggaru* and *kanala*. [552]

The final dream also belongs to Gumuk.[5]

"I have been dreaming about Kunapipi, and two 'Dreaming' men [574]

5. Reference: Book 12, Series A, Dec. 27th, 1946.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

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787
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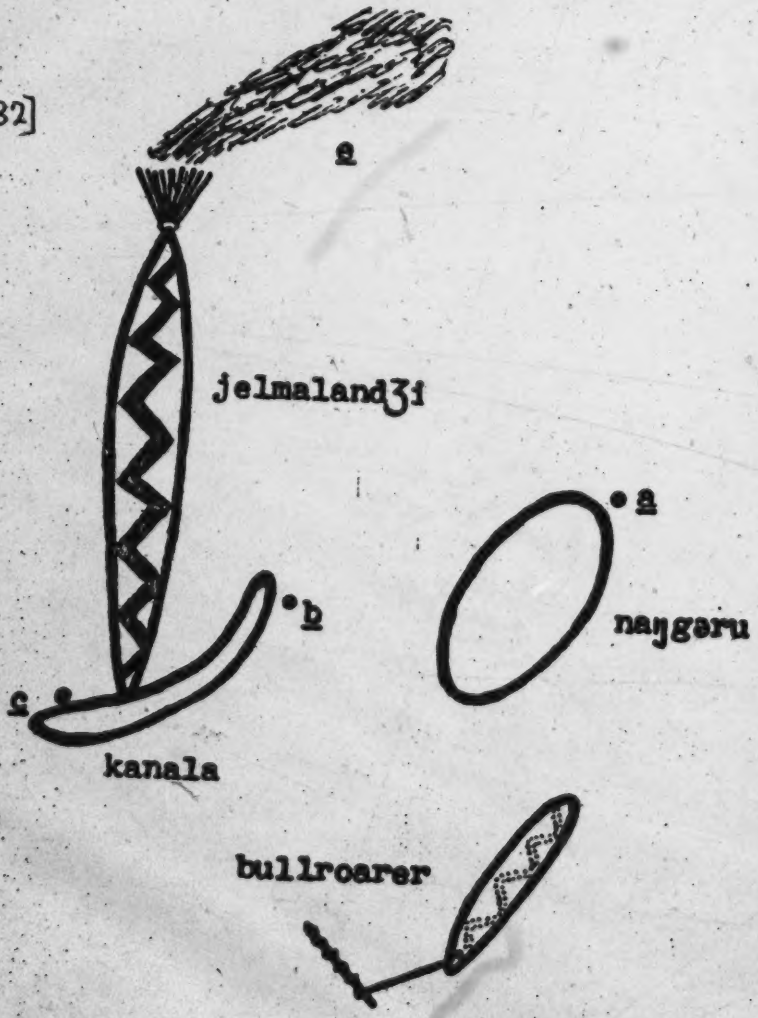
[574]

who were *kakawar* (that is, visiting strangers to the Kunapipi ceremonies).

"I came along with the *kakawar* through the bush, calling out at

[532]



Text Figure 10 *to illustrate Gumuk's second dream: after a drawing by him*

182 a man's or woman's own horde with whom he or she comes
431 into daily contact. They extend also to members of
461 other hordes and are emphasised strongly on occasions
602 when people from distant groups to whom the kinship
[574] organisation is extended, come as visitors. For a young man, such obligations are intense, and to discharge them he is obliged to keep up an almost continuous stream of presents, which entails constant work.

182 With each successive stage of initiation it is obligatory
431 for him to make gifts to the old men of the clan group into
461 which he is being initiated. This may become very irksome
626 and may even reach a stage when no matter how hard he
561 works he is unable completely to discharge all his obligations, so laying himself open to the fear of reprisals, such as
[754] visitation by *kälka* (sorcerers who kill by the use of magic) or by other agencies. Fear of the use of secret methods of reprisal is a very real one, and provides, for a man, one of the strongest inducements to work, to keep pace with his obligations, and so to give no cause for resentment.

431 In those ceremonies such as the *kunabibbi* and *ŋulmark*
561 which transcend clan and tribal boundaries, and are not
796 restricted to, or regarded as the proprietary right of, a
614 small group such as a clan, but are practised widely throughout the territory, these obligations are less onerous. In
778 others, of the type called *märdai'in*, the initiation ceremonies carried out by each clan or group of clans sharing the same totems, at which its sacred totems are revealed, the burden of the gifts or payments is a heavy one. The internal solidarity of these small groups is intense, and their *märdai'in* or *räŋga*—the secret name for the objects which represent the *mälli*, the "shade" or "spirit" of the totemic ancestors themselves—are jealously guarded. These *räŋga* are very sacred and are regarded as dangerous to the

192 431 The giver knows that his gift must be reciprocated eventually and he gains much satisfaction from the anticipation of this.

(2) *kännän gurrupän*, a free gift, pure and simple, without any reciprocal obligation, as between *gurruto* (relations) of certain orders, and *mulkuro* (strangers), where there is a unilateral obligation to make presents. [574 609] To strangers, especially to visitors, it is customary, even obligatory, to make gifts of food or *gerri*, but as these people do not come within the normal kinship horizon there exists no established code of behaviour towards them and reciprocation is therefore not expected.[24]

(3) *baka bäkmärämma*, (lit. tail break), i.e. "to turn back the tail", to reciprocate. A present with definite reciprocal obligation. This type of giving carries the obligation to make a return gift or payment at once, and is quite different from the vague and indefinite obligation which characterises gifts of the *yanna gurrupän* type.

[606] (4) *milmarr, bundur*, the name applied to special forms of cumulative giving of gifts to relatives of certain

[24] The importance of discovering some bond between individuals in Arnhem Land society, in order to establish a code of behaviour, is stressed by the fact that those outside the kinship system are called *mulkuro*, (strangers). When I asked a native who was short of tobacco if he had asked a certain white man he replied at once: "*Yuta bällända dual'—mulkuro*". He is a new white man that one—a stranger (with the implication "and therefore one with whom I have no bond, towards whom I have no established pattern of behaviour"), that is, one whose reactions there is no means of predicting.

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 We Wangurri clans-people are a bush people (pages 16-29, 42). We are very strong and very fierce and good fighters. All the coast people are afraid of us. Our country comes to the salt water at only one place on Arnhem Bay (map, page 40). It was here that we saw the Macassar. They brought [439] us presents of rice, syrup, calico, tomahawks, dugout canoes, knives, and gin. We gave them pearl shell, pearls, tortoise shell, sandalwood, and other woods they use for medicine. We helped them gather trepang (pages 456-458).

159 273 439 579 At these times, when the Macassar prahus took down their sails and masts and their men disembarked, our old men drank plenty, for it was then they got all the gin they wanted for the presents they gave the Macassar men. There would always be big fights. In the morning you could see blood everywhere and many people were killed. While the old men fought with the knives from around their belts and with tomahawks, clubs, and spears, we children used to sneak in and eat the food that they had left. We always waited our chance and rushed in and ran away again.

159 431 609 I can remember one day my father's giving me some tortoise shell and saying, "Mahkarolla, you go and give this to that Macassar man and make friends with him so that when he comes again he will know you, and you will know him, and you will have a feeling of friendship for each other." I did. The Macassar man talked to me but I didn't understand him. I forget the rest.

159 574 Another thing I remember when I was very small: I went with my father through the Gwiyamil clan country to the Wulkara people for a corroboree. This is the path our ranga took in the stories we know about him, and those people are also Sand Fly people (pages 33-35), just as we Wangurri are.

159 857 Before we were circumcised we little boys played spear-fighting games, talked about sneaking up and killing a man, and we threw clay mud balls at each other. When it was hot in the rainy season we swam in the sea (pages 125-128).

Later we played being grown men and women with the little girls. We made little fires in the sand beaches. We went out just like our fathers and pretended to spear fish, and the little girls went into the bush and brought home bush food (vegetable food). We made little bark huts just like our fathers' and mothers'. The girls would come in and lie beside us as our wives and we were their husbands.

When we were little boys, others boys who were a little bit bigger joked us about the wives we were going to marry. This made me feel very ashamed. Little girls joked the same way. They also became ashamed. When we got bigger we weren't ashamed any more. We were glad.

159 867 I think I always knew it was wrong to "play with" a girl of the Yiritcha

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

JUNGLE LORE AND ETIQUETTE

If a woman secretly hunted for men's food at such a time, she would bring trouble on herself and relatives, and the species of game she killed would become scarce; when the men caught nothing they would say: 'Some woman must have eaten food here', and within a few hours every woman in the locality would be expected to produce an alibi. The life of her husband would be in jeopardy and sooner or later misfortune would overtake him. In offering condolence to an injured man, sympathizers will observe that, as there seems to be no apparent cause for his misfortune, his wives have probably violated this food law.

In bush camps men have a lot of time on their hands, and if a man strolls into a friend's camp he can be sure of a welcome and a remarkable display of polite consideration. If the host has been fishing, he will share the food with his visitor, totally ignoring women and children in his camp. He will remark that there are more fish if his visitor would care to stay and share them, or, if he shows signs of leaving, the largest and best will be pressed on him and the host may even give him a spear or spear-thrower as well. When I asked why such ostentatious gifts were made, I was assured that it was customary, and that the man sitting alone in his camp, except for his wives and children, is inordinately pleased when a friend visits him, and the gifts help to express his goodwill and friendliness.

On the other hand, aboriginal farewells are never prolonged. At the conclusion of a visit, or when leaving the home camp for an extended period, the men continue their discussions till the women, children, and dogs have started out. Men then terminate their visit by nonchalantly remarking: 'I'm finished; I'm going.' Nothing more is said on either side, and they leave.

'My word, Naratjin, you have a fine boy there. He has

YULENGOR

262 Lagoons overflow in the wet season and hundreds of acres [133] of low-lying land are under water. It is country where water- [222] lilies grow in profusion. Women dive for the root-stocks [252] and roast great quantities of them. Lily seed-pods are eaten raw, sieved through network dilly-bags, or ground between stones and baked into cakes.

The most palatable of all vegetable food is probably the [137] corm or swamp rush, 'rarkai', and these swamps are famous [222] throughout Arnhem Land. Rarkai rushes cover brackish swamps near the coast, and women systematically turn over many acres of black mud in their search for the nut. In east Arnhem Land I know of several such swamps, each of which [361] supported a hundred or even two hundred Yulengor for six [796] weeks at a time. During the corm season the hordes make the swamps a rendezvous for corroborees, ceremonies, and initia- [574] tions. Corms are about the size of marbles, and in addition to being the most nutritious of all their vegetable foods they possess a pleasant nutty flavour.

[771] Several foods have totemic significance and find a place in ceremonial practices. Probably the most important of these is 'ngutu', the nut of the cycad palm, and it is said that this yellowish brown nut was first eaten by spirit-Ancestors, [773] who instructed their daughters in the art of preparing it. [462] Legend declares that as the knowledge was received first by [222] women, they have for all time to attend to the gathering and cooking of all vegetable foods.

262 Hard-shelled cycad nuts are cracked between stones, and 252 the kernels soaked in water for three or even five days. Most of the poison is thus leached out, and the pulp is wrapped in bark and buried in hot sand over which a fire is lit. Cycad meal can be baked into flat coarse cakes that sometimes weigh up to fifteen pounds, that keep for days, and can be carried long distances for use at ceremonial gatherings. [574] 'Ngutu' has sustaining properties, and Yulengor live on it for weeks as they prepare for inter-tribal corroborees.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

into flame long after a bush-fire has passed, are in all seriousness attributed to mischievous spirits. All fires thus have some meaning, and though their significance may be wrongly interpreted, they do play an important part in elementary signalling. 202 372 [775]

A family brought the news to Yirrkala that a woman and her child were dangerously ill near Port Bradshaw, and as Mataman was going that way a few days later, he promised to let the local people know about the patients by smoke-fires. If they were dead he was to light a smoke-fire, and if they had recovered he was to do nothing. When great clouds of smoke billowed over the hills the following day, it was assumed that the woman was dead, and the usual wailing and mourning songs were sung. However, a few days later the woman and her child walked into Yirrkala and explained that Mataman had been hunting kangaroos and had lit a fire to smoke them out. [765]

Friendly visitors invariably light fires to give warning of their approach; otherwise they might be mistaken for enemies, and speared. In any case they do not know where their hosts are hunting, and they light fires to invite an answer from the camp they intend visiting. Smoke is also sent up as a warning signal when anything untoward happens, and a passing lugger is enough to start a line of fires. As each party of hunters sees the boat, they light fires to warn their friends. [574]

The rapidity with which detailed messages are passed from one camp to another has led to the assumption that information has been sent by secret smoke-signals. But the message-carriers are human. I have known men and women to travel long distances by night and, by taking short cuts, to be on the beach the following morning to meet the lugger after we had sailed some sixty miles overnight. [203]

A government officer was due to arrive at the station by air, and as the Yulengor had not previously seen an aeroplane

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

FAMILY LIFE IN THE JUNGLE

Theories of conception and birth have been severely jolted in recent years, for until recently it was not known that intercourse had any connection with conception, and Yulengor regarded it as being merely a natural and satisfying function. There are no virgins in aboriginal society, for at an early age a girl is handed over to her husband and is married for the rest of her life. In parts of western Arnhem Land, when hordes gather for ceremonies, their hosts provide them with food and also advance their wives for the visitors' well-being. The question of illegitimate children does not arise, for births are thought to be the work of a spirit.

At some time when the potential father is hunting, the spirit of his prospective child comes to him and presents him with a large fish or turtle and enables him to spear it. Not yet comprehending the omen, the man returns to camp with the spirit at heel, and when all are asleep this spirit enters the mother and begins its preparations for birth. In a variation of this belief, the spirit follows the mother when she goes for water, and jumps into the water so as to enter the woman. When a man knows that his wife is to become a mother he endeavours to recall some unusual experience that has befallen him in hunting. His mind dwells on any large fish he has caught, perhaps in the last month, or maybe several years previously, and he regards this incident as marking the coming of the spirit-child.

Half-caste children compelled a readjustment of these ideas. First it was assumed that eating the white man's food or the wearing of white clothing caused white-skinned offspring. An anthropologist, visiting an Arnhem Land mission station at the invitation of a missionary of irreproachable character, asked an aboriginal why his normal full-blood son had a light skin. The father's startling reply was: 'The child's mother works in the missionary's house.'

According to a revised and popular birth theory, intercourse is necessary only as an act of preparation. In itself

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

of the hordes sit apprehensively under shady trees whilst the men paint intricate totemic designs on the initiates. More often than not several hordes meet for the occasion, and all the boys between eight and ten years of age are prepared by relatives. Armlets, dilly-bags and trinkets are hung around their necks for decorative purposes, and sometimes they carry a knife or steel tomahawk. When their moment arrives, the boys are brought to the ceremonial ground, and the men dance and sing with increasing emotion, till at last they bunch together and with kindly reluctant movements force each boy into the arms of a crouching man who supports and holds him. Women relatives close in and dance around the tightly packed circle and wail in rising agitation, others gash their heads, and girl playmates of the initiates cry amongst the trees and cut their breasts with sharp shells. An invitation is often extended to a visiting Yulengor to perform the actual operation, which is frequently prolonged by the use of a stone knife or spearhead. The loud purposeful calls of the men seldom drown the cries of the victim. It is then that a wave of emotion sweeps over the entire camp.

When a nomad is sick the relatives will crouch tightly around him, and their excessively mournful sympathy is conducive to moans and vapours from the patient. Eye-rolling and groans will accompany even simple sprains and abdominal pains and inspire sympathetic cries and wails. At the approach of death, the next of kin draw near pathetically brushing flies from the patient, attempting to sustain warmth with sheets of paper-bark, but unwittingly stifling him in a turgid atmosphere. There are wails and shrieks if continuous movement is not seen from some part of the body. Commotion at death is indescribable; women deliberately hurl themselves on the ground with loud cries, and they wail loudly and tremulously as they stab their heads with sharp stones and shells.

Egyptians preserved mummified bodies in pyramids,

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

the Junkgowa met the Men with the clap-sticks and learned that they had come from Murungga Island, one of the Crocodile Islands. Like old Men previously encountered, these also claimed to be self-created Junkgowa from the Murrnggin clan; they had crossed over to Elcho Island to prevent the female Junkgowa coming to the coast. This temporary restraint was soon overcome, and the Men called the Women 'gutara' or brothers' or sisters' grandchildren, and the Women reciprocated with 'mari' or grandparents' brothers.

On the first night, the Men brought out their clap-sticks, and like modern nomads they entertained their visitors with horde songs. But their timing was so fast, that the visitors were shocked, and said they would teach them a new song; thereupon they introduced them to the celebrated Ngara ceremony. After it was all over the Men conceded that they had a lot to learn about singing: 'We may be better at food-gathering, but you Women are our superiors in singing and totemic lore. We would like to sing your way.' Thus the old Murrnggin songs lapsed and the Junkgowa ceremonies were established.

Many songs were sung through the night, and as the Men began to sing them, a subterranean being, 'Bunar-ka' (literally a roll of paper-bark), rose out of the sand and thumped the ground in unison. Bunar-ka is totemically linked with the rite of circumcision, and the Junkgowa made the most of the occasion by taking two Murrnggin boys and initiating them beside the sun-stone. Designs were painted on the boys, and they were loaded with belts, armlets, and other brightly coloured decorations still used in circumcision ceremonies. They sang and danced the usual preliminaries, and then chipped a sharp flake from the sun-stone with which to perform the operation. As it neared completion, the youths sank into the sand, and later came up some distance offshore, leaving an outcrop of rock to